

# *News from*

## *Congressman Christopher Carney*

### *Representing Northeast and Central Pennsylvania*

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## **CARNEY STATEMENT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY HEARING**

**Washington, D.C.**--Congressman Christopher P. Carney, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight, issued the following opening statement for the Subcommittee hearing, "Ready to Lead? DHS and the Next Major Catastrophe":

"When Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, I was not a Member of Congress.

"I was, however, a Naval officer. So I knew from experience what the Federal government can do when its efforts are coordinated and it is well led.

"In the wake of Katrina, it was clear for all to see that there was neither coordination nor leadership.

"DHS – the Department charged with *leading* the Federal response – sat back and waited for others to act.

"Why? Because leaders didn't lead. People didn't know their missions.

"The problems started at the top; when the Secretary of Homeland Security's then-Chief of Staff had not even *read* the National Response Plan, it's easy to understand why others across the Department may have been confused about their roles.

"I knew then, and I know now, that we can do better.

"I know because I've seen it from the inside.

"Today I want Mr. Parent to tell me what DHS and its senior leadership will do the next time a major disaster is looming.

"I want to hear how the lessons of Katrina and 9/11 have been turned into specific, actionable plans.

"I was heartened to hear about the Department's focus on inter-agency working groups and on standardizing planning.

"It is tough to overstate the importance of planning – and of having a planning *system*. In the Navy, planning is everything. When we're talking about disaster preparedness and response, it should be no different.

"DHS is to be commended for recognizing the void in planning and moving quickly to fill it.

"Now it's time for the other agencies that will play key roles in any response effort to fully get on board.

"Some agencies in the Federal government have been terrific about working with DHS. Others, not so much. And a few proceed as if the Homeland Security Act was just some bad dream that never really happened.

"But DHS is here, and it's not going away any time soon. For the good of the country, it is time to accept that.

"Turf battles – whether in the executive or the legislative branch – do us all a disservice, and those who put turf above duty dishonor themselves and their important mission.

"I look forward to hearing about the areas that DHS has worked across agency lines, and learning what we in Congress can do to replicate this across the Department."

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